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SCOPE OF THE WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT LIBRARY,  
BY MARY G. LACYWITH ADDITIONS BY E.B. HAWKS AND E.L. OGDEN.  
1914

In undertaking to write an account of the scope of the work of the Library of the U. S. Department of Agriculture it is fully realized that we cannot be either new or original but it is hoped that there may be an interest in the aggregation of facts, however familiar, which have heretofore been considered singly. It is possible to hold a penny so close to the eye that we cannot see the sun, and it is also possible that in the faithful and painstaking performance of daily and routine duties we may lose sight of what it is all about. The sum of all our parts is needed to make a perfect whole, and like the child who could not see the woods for the trees, we need to climb to some point of vantage and look down upon our work in its entirety.

The scope of the work of the Library is the scope of the work of the Department. As the work of the Department broadens so does the work of the Library. The work of the Department may be divided under four heads: (1) the work of research (2) extension or educational work (3) police duties, as the enforcement of the Pure food and drug law, meat inspection regulations etc. (4) the work of the Office of Experiment Stations, through the Experiment Station Record and in other ways. In all of these activities the Library has a service to perform. Each branch of the Department's work has its

own particular needs, but the developments of science demonstrate more forcibly every year the fundamental unity of science. This fact sometimes causes conflicts. Formerly the botanical work of the Department and the use of the botanical books was confined quite strictly to the Divisions of <sup>Botany & of Physiology</sup> Vegetable Pathology, The chemical work to the Division of chemistry, the entomological work to the Division of Entomology, and forestry work to the Division of Forestry. Now the Bureau of Plant Industry uses chemical books, entomological books, books on forestry, engineering, medicine etc. The Bureau of Entomology needs at least a few botanical books, a goodly number of periodicals on medicine, some books on chemistry including an expensive dictionary of chemistry and so on. The Bureau of chemistry needs many books on medicine, a few reference books on botany and entomology, many law books etc. The passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act in 1906 greatly increased the scope of the work of the Department and also the needs of the Library, making it necessary to buy many books which apparently would be out of place in an agricultural library - books for example on cosmetics, proprietary medicines, dentistry, cook books etc. The work of the Office of Public Roads calls for books on the principles of finance, bond issues, interest calculating etc., which at first sight seems far removed from agricultural interests. Even the periodicals on millinery are of interest to the Biological survey.

The work of the Library may be divided as follows; Administration, including the order work and supervision of the book-keeping; Cataloguing and indexing; Work with periodicals; Reference and loan work; Distribution of Department



publications and Translating. For the benefit of those who have recently come to the Library it may be of interest to explain here that the Cataloguing Division of the Library is in charge of Miss Helen Thompson;

The Periodical division is in charge of Miss Olcott, the Bindery, in charge of Miss Parker, the Loan desk, Miss G. E. Upton, and the Reference work in charge of Miss Hawks who has also general supervision of the work of the loan desk. The translating is in charge of Miss Knapp, who also does the indexing of the foreign periodicals for which the library publishes cards and catalogues the Department publications.

The administrative work is hard to explain in detail nor does such explanation seem necessary. It is the dynamic center from which all the rest of the work is directed and in which attention to details is never allowed to obscure the vision of the co-ordination of the whole. It should perhaps be explained that the correspondence of the Library is very heavy. This is supervised personally by the Librarian, except in connection with the claiming of missing nos. of current periodicals, which is in charge of the head of the Periodical division, and certain correspondence of the Loan and Reference work which is in charge of Miss Hawks. The Librarian also has general supervision of the work of the Order Department including the book-keeping which with the new uniform system of accounting adopted by the Department at the beginning of the present fiscal year is very complex.

The work of the Catalogue division is the very heart of the library's activities for upon it depends the ability of the Library to meet the demands made upon it for

reference work of all kinds. The Reference librarian is a mortal wonder to those who see her work, but much of her efficiency is owing to her ability to use the catalogue fully and get out of it all that it is designed to give. The catalogue was begun by Miss J. A. Clark in 1894 and from 1895 all accessions have been catalogued as received. The back cataloguing was done as fast as possible but for a long time we had to depend upon the shelf list and the most positive statement that could be made regarding a book that was not forthcoming was "I cannot find that we have it" Mr. Cutter, the former librarian, to whom is due the reorganization of the Library on modern lines, used to wonder if the time would ever come when we could look into the catalogue and say definitely that we had or had not a book. We do that now, although there are a few classes in which not all the books have been catalogued. Some dates which stand out in the history of the Cataloguing division and which enlarged its scope of usefulness are 1894 when the Library began to publish the list of its accessions, 1899 when the printing of cards for Department publications was begun by Mr Cutter, — the first time this had been done by any institution — and 1902 when the printing by the Library of Congress of the cards for the accessions to the Library was begun. Other dates little less important are 1904 when the Library, in co-operation with the Library of Congress, began the printing of cards for the following important agricultural journals: Die landwirtschaftlichen versuchsstationen, Annales de la science agronomique, Landwirtschaftliche Jahrbücher, and 1906 when the printing



and distribution of the cards for the Department publications was turned over to the Library of Congress, this Library continuing the preparation of the cards. Previous to that time the cards were printed at the Government Printing Office. Special bulletins have also been issued from time to time which comprise lists of the books in the library relating to different subjects - Sugar beets, poultry, mushrooms, forestry, irrigation and drainage, botany and entomology have been so listed. The plan was to publish lists of the contents of the Library on special subjects which together would form a printed catalogue of the whole Library, and they do, of course, form a partial one. The publication of these various lists and catalogues has increased the scope of the usefulness of the Library and called attention to its resources.. So much for the silent and unceasing labors of the Catalogue division which make possible the activities of the other divisions of the work.

The continuation list is closely allied to the catalogue being an up to date catalogue of serials and publications of infrequent issue. It is also a key to all the information in regard to the periodicals contained in the Library and a record of procedure in regard to them. This list was Miss Barnett's idea. It was begun about 1895 and she and Miss Hawks worked on it together until they got the serials in the Library catalogued, and it was a huge piece of work.

This list has proved invaluable, not only for the purpose for which it was designed, but for many other things. For instance the adding of title entries for sample copies received, notes

of correspondence concerning the publication and the date of receipt of each number, tho' involving the handling of a publication both before and after pasting has saved much confusion in the separation of numbers in the course of their sojourn in the uncatalogued state, has prevented the claiming of numbers actually received, in short has made every serial available from the time it is received.

Closely related to the continuation list is the work with periodicals and the binding. The history of the development of this work, upon which Miss Ogden is an authority, is intensely interesting, and would be incorporated here but for necessary limitations as to time. It tells the work of this division from the time when a list of the current periodicals received each day was made by Miss Hawks and posted for the information of readers. It is obvious that the number of pieces received each day was very small to make this daily listing possible. The periodicals themselves were placed in pigeon holes for the purpose, and the farm papers in spring back binders which were displayed on a large table, the top of which was a single piece of redwood. The table just referred to was an important feature of the library in its early history as it brought to us the only mention we ever got in the Washington guide books, and visitors used to come in and ask for it as one of the "sights". It is a far cry from this simple method of handling the periodicals to the present admirable system of record and circulation, which only needs a reasonable consideration on the part of the users of the journals to ensure satisfaction to all concerned.



The outgoing correspondence relating to the farm journals, which were then in charge of Mr. Snyder furnishes some entertaining reading. One letter that came in response to a request for some western poultry journal said that no more was published and added "It was a good little paper while it lasted, but the editor went broke playing the races and is now a fugitive from justice"

There were many personal touches that added interest. Mr. Snyder used to paste the letters themselves in the files of the journals in the place of the number referred to, if the reply was unfavorable. Mr. Snyder was intensely interested in his work and is affectionately remembered by those who were associated with him. If we laugh sometimes at the original systems of headings and alphabetical arrangement that he worked out, it is with a kindly and not critical spirit.

The history of the development of the bindery work is very interesting but will have to be omitted for lack of time, of a satisfactory form of temporary binding for incomplete sets <sup>the introduction</sup> and those not deemed worthy of permanent binding has saved more time and trouble to the users of the library than almost any other improvement of recent years. It has also greatly improved the appearance of the shelves.

The reference work of the library is very important consisting of the making up of lists of references on special subjects, the hunting out of information on obscure points, the deciphering and verification of incomplete references etc. etc. It is varied also, ranging from the market price of potatoes to the names of foreign agricultural officials, and from the identification of Torreyea, to the nearest railway station to Woodberry Forest, Va. Some of it is tedious and laborious, most of it very interesting and and some of it very funny. Most people come to the Library for information with evidently a deep seated determination to keep their purpose as dark as possible. On one occasion a man asked for what we had on the botany of the Orient, some trouble was taken to hunt out the material we had on this subject, but he did not seem satisfied, and it took several attempts to discover that what was wanted was the process by which attar of roses is made. Another man came and asked for the books on herbs, When these were forth coming and he still could not find what he wanted he consented to tell us that he wanted to know the size of the dose to give a sick horse of a certain medicine made from an herb?. So it takes not only the ability to find the information wanted when that is known to us, but also the ability to find the information, wanted when it is buried in the recesses of a reticent readers mind, and we have no notion what it is. But Miss Hawks is equal even to this mind reading feat! An increasing amount of reference work is done through correspondence, as the library becomes better known as the natural resort in all matters pertaining to agriculture. Nowhere in the library is its usefulness to its own public more forcefully demonstrated than at the loan desk, with its stacks of books outgoing and incoming all day long, and a constant stream of messengers from the Bureaus, Divisions and offices carrying out this work.



Three people are constantly busy at this desk and sometimes more and the dispatch and efficiency with which the work is carried on there reflects great credit on Miss Upton.

Another important part of the Library's work is that done through the mailing lists which are in charge of Miss Wilkins. There is a list of addresses of libraries, institutions etc. which receive all the publications of the Department, and if an address appears on this list it is not necessary for it to be on the several Bureau lists, as all publications of the Department will be automatically sent. Besides this the foreign mailing lists of all the Bureaus, Divisions and Offices are kept here, and besides being kept separate for reference, they are united into a consolidated list which makes it possible to detect and prevent duplication. Miss Wilkins is in charge of this work, and has given me these cards as samples to show the method of keeping the lists, ~~of the mailing.~~

The reasons for the filing of these lists in the Library, are: (1) it is necessary that there should be a file in some one place in order that duplication and mistakes may be noticed and information sent to the Division whose list is concerned. (2) The addresses are largely in foreign languages and need oversight for form, etc., by some one who knows something of the languages. The advantage to the Library is in the matter of exchanges. It is very desirable that we should know what institutions are receiving our publications, in order that we may be able to request their publications in exchange. Such exchanges were formerly sent to the Bureaus on whose mailing list the publishing institution appeared. They were considered the property of the Bureau, never entered in the Library, and, if there was no one in charge of the Bureau Library, were not infrequently lost. Ever since 1894 the Library has been trying to have these exchanges addressed to the main Library, or at least sent to it for recording. This has been accomplished in all but a few cases. There are still one or two Bureaus which are unwilling to give up the old method, in spite of general orders from the Secretary. However, in almost all cases, the exchanges are now coming to the Library.

The Library has charge of the "Libraries list," that is, the list of institutions receiving all the publications of the Department both domestic and foreign; also of the foreign Yearbook list and farmers bulletin list, and it is also permitted to sustain a mailing list for the Monthly list of publications, from which selections are made by the institutions receiving it. These lists are used for the purpose of receiving exchanges. Miscellaneous requests for publications are also referred to the Library unless addressed to a special Bureau. In passing upon such requests the nature of the institution requesting it is considered and the facts as to the receipt of its publication by the Library. Requests not granted are referred to the Division of Publications, and by that Division to the Superintendent of documents, who sends information as to the price etc., of the publication desired. Each Bureau is allowed to send to foreign addresses only a stated number of publications each month. Its regular mailing list is also limited in number, and it is one of the duties of the Library to see that this limit is not overstepped.



Attention to these mailing lists and requests for publications is a part of the work of the Library which consumes a great deal of ~~the~~ time, but the advantages of it for exchange purposes, and also the fact that much of the work can be done more satisfactorily by the Library than any other part of the Department, makes it very desirable to have the work done here. In Genl. order no. 146, under date of Aug. 23, 1911 it is directed that to prevent duplication, the Bureaus and Divisions shall file in the Library of the Department lists of libraries and other institutions to which their publications are regularly sent. The Librarian shall be notified of all changes and additions in these lists. It is further directed that not more than 10% of the total number of addresses on any one list shall be to individuals.

The translating which is done by Miss Knapp is considerable. Last year 350 letters were sent to the Library for translation and besides these there were 17 articles, consisting of 73 papers translated.

Another of the agencies which has promoted the efficiency of the library service to the Department has been the formation of Bureau and Division branch libraries to do special reference work and be in closer touch with the work of the particular offices which they serve than seemed possible in the main Library as then organized.

The work of the branch libraries ~~which~~ may be known by the account of them given in the Librarian's report for 1911. is very interesting. Each has its own peculiar interests.

For instant the Forest Service Library in addition to its 14,000 books and pamphlets has a collection of something less than 30,000, mounted, classified, and catalogued photographs in its care. The pictures are classified by states and then subdivided by objects. They are then indexed in the photographic card catalogue by specific subjects, such as names of species lumbering operations, mountains and rivers or whatever shows in the picture.

A collection of about 4000 lantern slides has been made from the Forest Service negatives and is kept on file in the Library. These are for use in the Service and to lend to persons desiring to use them in lecturing on forestry. The only expense connected with their use is the payment of transportation charges and the making good of losses by breakage. There is a great and increasing demand for these slides. Sometimes as many as a fourth of the collection is out at once.

The Bureau of Entomology maintains a dictionary catalogue of all books, pamphlets and reprints relating to entomology contained in the Department. This catalogue now contains about 30,000 cards. This Library has also a set of the Concilium Bibliographicum cards, relating to entomology, which is very useful in that it brings together in one place the greater part of the current periodical literature of entomology, index, begun years ago, containing economic notes and out of the way bits of information on such subjects as mimicry, flight, maternal affection, spread of disease etc. These features of the special work of the Branches are cited as being indicative of the activities of them all.

The Library keeps up to date



So much for the various agencies in the Library for carrying on its work and serving the Department to the best of its power. But in addition to the work for the Department there is an ever increasing amount of work done for the Agricultural Experiment Stations, the Agricultural Colleges and other agricultural agencies out of Washington. This outside work may be briefly included under the following heads: (1) Inter library loans, (2) Consultation with and advice to the officers of Agricultural colleges and Experiment Stations in the organization or reorganization of their libraries, (3) Distribution of duplicates to such libraries.

The Library is frequently called on for advice regarding the organization or reorganization of the libraries of the Agricultural colleges and the Experiment Stations. In two cases assistants from the Library have been sent to do the preliminary work in such an undertaking, and the calls are frequent for advice on every subject relating to the administration of such libraries. It is no doubt hard for one who has not experienced it to realize just what it is to have the help and inspiration of a trained and experienced person in starting a new library or reorganizing an old one. The plan worked out under such supervision, and the material aid given in instituting radical changes in the existing order of things, or starting a new order cannot be adequately described. The person put in charge of such work is often untrained and inexperienced, and the difficulties to be met and the amount of work to be done before a library can be put into any sort of running order, seem a hopeless task. I doubt if there could ever be another case as bad as my own, for I was offered the position of librarian of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Virginia, and the Experiment Station as well, before I even

knew what a card catalogue was much less had ever seen one. I accepted with the alacrity of ignorance and was saved from utter failure by the help given me by this Library.

There is an immense work to be done by the libraries of the agricultural colleges and experiment stations, a work each year more insistent in its demands. Very few of them, however, have risen to their full opportunity in aiding in the extension work of the colleges. The work of this Library, through correspondence and consultation with the librarian on the part of the officers of the agricultural colleges is a little realized but steady and strong influence towards the realization of the ideals of those who understand the opportunity and the need which confront the agricultural libraries.

The next phase of the outside work of the library to be touched on is its publications, but as these have been spoken of in the section devoted to the catalogue, it is sufficient here to say that the Lists of accessions to the Library, now superseded by the Monthly bulletin of the Library form a very <sup>valuable</sup> contribution to the bibliography of agriculture, which becomes each year of more use.

No account of the scope of the Library's work would be in any sense complete that did not point out the ideals the librarian has for its development and growth. Some of these are the increasing and perfecting of the collections in the library, and the making of them as widely useful as possible, without interfering

with the work of the Department. Dr True touches on some of the ideals of the present library administration in his report as bibliographer of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations. He suggests that the functions of the Department Library might be extended so that it could act as a central agency for the receipt of duplicates from the Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations and their distribution among them. It might also supplement the work of the Colleges and Stations by acting as a bureau of bibliographic information in the literature of agriculture. By such means its collections might be widely increased in usefulness.



## Inter-library Loans.

By Emma B. Hawks.

These have grown very rapidly during the last few years. During the 90's, I do not remember that we ever used to borrow from other libraries. I imagine that whatever borrowing there was, was done by the individuals needing the books. Even a very few years ago a trip by Moses with a bag to the Library of Congress and Surgeon General's Library once a week was considered sufficient. We now have two deliveries from Library of Congress every day and send either a messenger or the Department wagon to Surgeon General's Library every day. The requests to these two libraries are mailed in duplicate the last thing every afternoon, and include requests from all the bureaus, except that the Bureau of Plant Industry sends its requests and receives its books direct from Library of Congress. We borrow also quite commonly from Geological Survey, Smithsonian, National Museum and Patent Office. Books not to be found in the city we try to find in some out of town library. We borrow a good deal of botany from Gray Herbarium, Arnold Arboretum, Missouri botanical garden. Lloyd library and entomology from Harvard Museum of Comparative zoology.

Our loans to other libraries are also increasing. The privilege is made special use of by the State agricultural colleges and experiment stations. To these we send under frank. Other libraries pay cost of carriage. We hope that the collection of reprints now being formed will soon be large enough to assist materially in this work, by enabling us to lend the special

article desired without sending a heavy volume of <sup>a</sup>periodical which may be needed by the Department while it is absent.

Within the last year we have quite often made use of the courtesy of the Bureau of Animal Industry, by sending to be photographed short articles in volumes which were large or which could not readily be spared. Sometimes the articles have been copied on the typewriter, but the photographic method is, of course, more satisfactory, as there can then be no question of the accuracy of the copy.



## Book selection - Guiding principles.

By Emma B. Hawks.

In books relating to agriculture proper the aim has been to form a collection containing everything that a National library of agriculture would be supposed to have to satisfy not merely the present demand for books for immediate use, but to supply such as might be needed for research in years to come. This has led to the acquirement of many books and sets of periodicals for which there was no immediate call, but which "ought to be available somewhere". Such books, if they are on agricultural subjects, ought to be available here. This principle has been followed to some extent also in botany. The plan of having available in the city all the botanical works necessary for reference and of avoiding unnecessary duplications is what led the Division of botany (Office of Tax. Invest.) to undertake its union catalogue of botanical works. We also intend to make the collection in entomology, especially American economic entomology, a fairly complete one. In certain of the classes the books acquired are limited quite closely to those needed for actual use, and in selecting these a good deal of dependence is placed on the recommendations of the Department workers in these lines. The work of the Department is continually broadening, and as new lines are taken up there are demands for books on subjects which seem far afield from agriculture. Such is the case recently with books on bond investments, which Roads and Forest Service have been needing. Of course in lines like these we do not aim to buy any books except such as are actually needed for the work, and not these if borrowing from some other library for a few weeks will answer the purpose.

## Duplicates

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By E. L. Ogden.

Perhaps once upon a time when the library first began there were no duplicates - but it is not probable that the happy state lasted more than a day or two if ever?. At any rate the duplicates were there in 1895. In 1900 they occupied a corner of the gallery near the documents and Miss Barnett and Miss Hawks used to dig into them and straighten them out every now and then. There were some very good bound sets of scientific as well as agricultural journals that had been discarded by O. E. S. when it gave up maintaining a separate collection. The problem was the same then as now, in some respects. We felt the things were too good to throw away, yet the time expended on them seemed a total loss to the library. Besides it was not considered quite legal then to exchange them and positively illegal to throw any away without an order formally condemning them. Miss Clark was very particular about this last but I fear many farm papers got into the waste basket anyway. When the gallery space was wanted about 1903 or 4, the duplicates were banished to an unspeakable attic where they groveled in confusion on the floor a play ground for rats and marvelous collectors of dirt. It is a marvel that any dirt was left to exist anywhere else in the world, so much of it was gathered into that one small dark room. There were rough shelves on one side and little by little other additions were made of discarded furniture, the pigeon holes from the reading room (when that was given up) helped a



lot, a table and a broken chair were added and gradually the mass of publications was roughly classified. There was no place in the library to keep even recent duplicates and these had to be sent to the attic too. It took years to sort it all ! By that time the necessity of getting rid of it was apparent and in Nov. 1905 a printed list of duplicates for exchange was sent out. As far as we can remember this was sent only to the large libraries on the domestic mailing list as it was thought probable that they might have material to send to us. Before that there was some talk of asking book dealers to take the scientific ones and give credit for them but that plan was found impracticable. A second printed list was sent out in March, 1906. The Library of Congress was then getting its duplicate exchange service into operation and a provision in the appropriation bills made it legal to transfer books from other libraries to the Library of Congress, without formality, so that a number of the more desirable publications were done up in packages, listed on cards and a list submitted to the Library of Congress. After a little the Library of Congress began to take things without waiting for a list and we got rid of quite a lot in that way. We discarded nothing that had not been bound, so that a good deal had to be kept anyway, and it was not possible to have the records near the duplicates so that a great deal of time and energy was spent in making notes in one place or the other and toiling up the stairs to the fourth story and back again. It was not long however before the Library of Congress was swamped and would

receive no more until further notice, and finally no more at all.

When the library was moved into the East Wing, provision was made for keeping the current duplicates in the periodical room, and some additional space was secured for storage of the numbered packages after they were listed. In Jan. 1911 another list was printed with the announcement that the publications listed would be sent free to the libraries of the State agricultural colleges and experiment stations & U. S. government libraries. To other libraries, they are offered as exchanges.

Subsequent lists have been typewritten and sent to selected libraries. The libraries seem glad to have them and the greater part of the listed material is asked for. The packages are made up from material taken from the periodical rooms when volumes are bound and from duplicates of annuals and separate books.

N. B. - All following the account of the 1905 list is not from personal experience - Miss Barnett would know whether it comes near the truth -